

Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item



Agenda Item: B

Date: 11/21/13

Title	Final Review of Proposed Revisions to <i>Virginia School Bus Specifications</i>		
Presenter	Kent C. Dickey, Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Operations		
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Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Previous Review or Action:

Previous review and action. Specify date and action taken below:

July 25, 2013. Proposed bus specifications accepted for first review.

October 24, 2013. Proposed bus specifications accepted for second review.

Action Requested:

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

Alignment with Board of Education Goals: Please indicate (X) all that apply:

	Goal 1: Accountability for Student Learning
	Goal 2: Rigorous Standards to Promote College and Career Readiness
	Goal 3: Expanded Opportunities to Learn
	Goal 4: Nurturing Young Learners
	Goal 5: Highly Qualified and Effective Educators
	Goal 6: Sound Policies for Student Success
X	Goal 7: Safe and Secure Schools
	Other Priority or Initiative. Specify:

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

Goal 7: The Board of Education is authorized in Sections 22.1-176 and 22.1-177, *Code of Virginia*, to promulgate regulations regarding pupil transportation, including regulations relating to the construction, design, operation, equipment, and color of public school buses. A primary purpose of the pupil transportation regulations is to ensure the safe transport of Virginia’s public school students to and from school in support of the goal of safe and secure schools.

The *Regulations Governing Pupil Transportation*, as approved in January 2004, deleted the sections that detailed the technical specifications for school buses and made them a separate document (*Virginia School Bus Specifications*) that requires periodic approval by the Board of Education. This allows the Department of Education to revise and update the bus specifications more efficiently than would be permitted under the process for revising regulations. It also permits the specifications to be updated

more frequently to recognize new or emerging practices and technology. The *Virginia School Bus Specifications* are presented to the Board of Education for approval as necessary. The last revisions to the specifications were approved by the Board on March 24, 2011. The design and manufacture of school buses and school activity buses must conform to the specifications in effect on the date of procurement by school divisions.

Summary of Important Issues:

The proposed bus specifications accepted by the Board for first review at its July meeting were posted on the Department's Web site for 30 days for public comment. Comments were received from two vendors and one school division and dealt mainly with the warning light switches and the driver's seat belt. The comments received and recommended actions are summarized in Attachment A.

The proposed specifications accepted by the Board for second review at its October meeting included revisions to warning light switches and requirements for fire suppression systems. In accordance with recommendations in the national school bus specifications, it was proposed that a fire suppression system be required for natural gas powered buses but optional for other bus fuel types (gasoline and diesel). Due to these proposed revisions, the second review version of the proposed specifications was posted on the Department's Web site for 10 days for public comment. Division superintendents, pupil transportation directors, and bus dealers and manufacturers were notified by e-mail of the comment period. The general public was notified of the comment period on the Department Web site. No public comments were received during the 10-day comment period.

The full specifications document with proposed revisions for final review is shown in Attachment B. These revisions are the same as proposed in the second review version presented at the October meeting. If the revisions on final review are approved by the Board, pursuant to 8VAC20-70-440, the revised bus specifications would take effect in 30 days on December 21, 2013.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

There is no impact on Department resources to revise these specifications. It is not anticipated that the proposed changes to the specifications will impose significant costs or administrative burdens on school divisions.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

No additional review/action is needed.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the proposed *Virginia School Bus Specifications*.